

Educational Press Association Pamphlets, No. 1

Information Respecting
the
Russian Soviet System
and
Its *Alleged* Propaganda
in
North America

BY

L. MARTENS

Representative of the Russian Socialist Federal
Soviet Republic

Price 10 Cents



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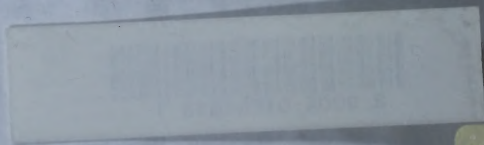
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EDUCATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

MONTREAL

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182 St. Catherine St. East,
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ANTI-BOLSHEVISM

By A. E. C.

The following poem, taken from an English weekly, makes references to London newspapers:

The anti-Bolshevik press
Has many wonderful
Tremendous
Arguments
Against Bolshevism;
So full of logic and correcti-
tude.

The *Morning Post* and *Times*
Are fearfully upset
Because in Russia
No one works or toils,
But also
Are very distressed
Because in Russia
Everyone is compelled
To work;
In Russia, no strikes
Are allowed.

Here a free country,
A man can quit his job,
And when he strikes and does
Quit

The *Times* and *Post* inquire
Why doesn't the Government
Club the dogs back to work.
Thank God for English
Law

And Order.

Bolshevism has no law
Nor order:

All chaos and anarchy:

A country

Where all are compelled

By stringent

Decrees and State regulations

To the bidding

Of Tyrant usurpers.

It must be chaos

Where so many laws

Are severely enforced.

And that tyrant,

Lenin,

Living in luxury

On a diet of fruit

In a whitewashed cell,

Seated, it is said,

On a throne

Of skulls,

A sensualist,

A fanatic,

A Puritan and a debauchee,

Drinking babies' blood

And writing pamphlets

On Fraternity.

And pacifist Trotsky,

Who

For peace at any price

Sold his country

At Brest-Litovsk,

And leads Red armies,

A full-fledged

Blood War-Lord,

Wading through carnage

To Imperialism.

And the remaining Bolsheviks

Are so uneducated, so illiterate,

As to want to teach

The peasant

How to read;

And so uncivilized

As not to believe

The words

Of Western statesmen.

But surely the

Great and freedom-loving

Constitutional

British working class,

Knows our armies

Are not for oil and steel and
gold,

But to teach

The Backward peoples

The Art

Of Self-determination.

But why they don't rally

To freedom-loving Wrangel,

And poor innocent Poland,

And peaceful Mr. Churchill

Passes the comprehension.

But perhaps those

Organs of Trade Unionism,

The *Morning Post* and *Times*,

May yet find

That you can't dope

Even the British workers

All the time,

INTRODUCTION

The statement here published was issued by Mr. L. Martens in response to a request from the Educational Press Association for a reply to a pamphlet entitled "Information Respecting the Russian Soviet System and Its Propaganda in North America," issued by the Department of Labour, Canada.

This pamphlet is published with the purpose of presenting to all earnest inquirers concerning the truth about Russia an authentic statement from an authoritative source, with the hope of creating a better and broader understanding between the peoples of Canada and Russia.

RUSSIAN SOCIALIST FEDERAL
SOVIET REPUBLIC

BUREAU OF THE REPRESENTATIVE
IN THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

ADDRESS:
WORLD'S TOWER BUILDING, 110 WEST 40TH ST
NEW YORK

September 16, 20

No.

Mr. Isidore Boltuck
Secy. of the Educational Press Assoc.
182 St. Catherine E
Montreal, Canada

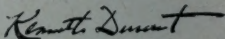
Dear Comrade Boltuck:

I am enclosing a statement prepared by Comrade Martens for you, respecting the pamphlet issued by the Canadian Department of Labor to which you called our attention in your letter of August 31.

If you think that any further information or comment is necessary in reply to this pamphlet I should be glad if you will let me know.

The Russian Soviet Government Bureau in New York was organized for the purpose of promoting commercial relations between the United States and Soviet Russia. Its activities have at times been confined strictly to this purpose. If a similar Bureau were to be established in Canada it would have the same purpose.

Yours fraternally,



Assistant Secretary of the Bureau

INFORMATION RESPECTING THE RUSSIAN SOVIET SYSTEM AND ITS ALLEGED PROPAGANDA IN NORTH AMERICA

MY attention has been called to a pamphlet entitled "Information Respecting the Russian Soviet System and Its Propaganda in North America," published under date of August, 1920, and bearing the imprint of the Canadian Department of Labor.

In view of the interest manifested by the Canadian Government, and by many Canadian citizens, in the negotiations which I have initiated for the re-establishment of commercial relations between the Dominion of Canada and Soviet Russia, I cannot ignore the references to my Government and myself contained in this pamphlet. The appreciation with which my mission has been received in Canada compels me to speak frankly regarding a publication which is apparently authorized by a branch of the Canadian Government and which contains gross mis-statements of fact and the most unwarranted insinuations regarding my Government and myself.

Although the pamphlet purports to deal with the "Russian Soviet System," it is in fact a general attack upon the whole international Socialist movement. Conditions in Soviet Russia and the actions and aims of the Soviet Republic are flagrantly misrepresented for the obvious purpose of discrediting the Socialist movement in general. This purpose is apparent on every page. Almost at the beginning the writer departs from

his pretense of investigating Soviet Russia to warn his readers that "the people of Canada do not as a whole fully appreciate the gravity of the socialist revolutionary movement" in Canada (page 3). Drawing a grotesquely distorted picture of conditions in Soviet Russia, the author pretends to find in this "the utter failure of socialistic ideals" (page 10). And thus attributing all of Russia's present difficulties, real and imagined, to socialism, the next step is to attribute the growth of socialism everywhere else to the influence of Soviet Russia. The anti-socialist propagandists who never tire of employing these arguments, always appear unconscious of the silly illogicality of their own reasoning. So, in the familiar fashion, the author of this pamphlet sees in every phase of the socialist movement in Canada the operation of a vast propaganda system directed from Moscow. To be sure, he is unable to produce the slightest evidence of the existence of any such propaganda, but contents himself with an attempt to mislead and frighten the innocent reader with many mysterious hints and insinuations. Solemnly inquiring "what is the cause and purpose of the active socialist propaganda in North America?" he proceeds to a discussion of my Bureau in New York, hinting the while at some sinister chain of connection between myself and the Canadian Socialist movement. It makes no difference that no such connection exists and that the pamphleteer is unable to show any; it is sufficient apparently for propagandists of this nature to mention two utterly unrelated things in the same paragraph, in the hope that the gullible may be misled into seeing some connection which exists only in the fevered mind of the writer. In their unaffected dread of socialist propaganda, these ardent plot-hunters and witch burners never seem to discover the one fact which should really be more terrifying to them than all the mysterious intrigues which they profess to discover; namely, that the socialist movement grows everywhere upon the fertile soil prepared for it by the decay of capitalism and needs no artificial preparation or stimulus from the outside. Thus the anonymous writer sponsored by the Canadian Department of Labour attempts to credit me

with the authorship of every phase of the socialist movement in Canada. His purpose is flattering, but scarcely credible. Among the "various organizations in Canada . . . spreading socialistic propaganda," he enumerates "The Socialist Party of Canada, the International Bible Students, the One Big Union, the Labour Church, the Finn Socialist Group, the Anarchist Communists," and eleven other miscellaneous organizations. The pamphlet would have you believe that all these organizations have been organized and promoted by myself acting under instructions from the Soviet Government.

It is not necessary for me to defend the Socialist Party of Canada, or any branch of the socialist movement, from such misrepresentation and attacks as are contained in this pamphlet. I desire, however, to point out a few of the more obvious mis-statements of fact regarding the Russian people, the Russian Soviet Republic, and myself.

The author of the pamphlet plunges into his subject with an amazing interpretation of history.

"By reason of German duplicity and intrigue," he writes, "the Russian people were betrayed, the last vestige of confidence in their rulers was dissipated, and, in March, 1917, the overthrow of the dynasty and government of the Romanoff Czars was accomplished." (Page 3.)

The meaning of this remarkable passage is quite clear when taken with the context in which the writer speaks of the Russian Revolution as the "most pathetic of national tragedies," which befell a people "incompetent" for self-government. It is plain that he regards the overthrow of the Romanoff dynasty as a regrettable incident, due to "German intrigue and duplicity." What comprehension of the Russian Revolution can we expect from one who takes this view of the first step in that great social movement?

The temperament and intelligence of the author is even more unmistakably exposed in his description of the Russian people as "generally illiterate and incompetent to govern themselves" (page 3). I am amazed to find such a sentiment in an official publication of a

Government professing belief in the institutions and ideals of popular self-government. And yet the remainder of the quoted passage clearly shows that the writer believes the Russian people to have been better off under the ancient tyranny of the Czars.

The easy assumption that the Russian people are "generally illiterate" is characteristic of the "information" contained in this pamphlet. As a matter of statistics, it is a fact that in 1917 more than two-thirds of the male population between the ages of 30 and 60 in the incorporated cities and towns of European Russia could read; likewise more than one-half of the female population between the ages of 30 and 50 could read. The percentage of literacy in the rural districts was lower, and yet even there two-fifths of the active male population could read. To be sure, these figures show a degree of illiteracy, inherited from the dark oppression of Czarism, which the Soviet Government is taking the most energetic measures to overcome; nevertheless, they certainly do not warrant a charge of incompetency against the Russian people because of "general illiteracy."

From what has gone before we are sufficiently prepared for the writer's characterization of the Soviet regime as "a couple of years of profligate living and wastefulness by those who suddenly acquired wealth by confiscation, and who were without desire or ability to use it wisely" (page 4). This lie is uttered without the slightest pretense of justification and is totally unsupported by evidence. There could be no more cruel untruth than to describe as "profligate and wasteful" the existence of the Russian people and the leaders of the Soviet Government during the past two years, in which they have suffered every privation and hardship that could be imposed by a ruthless blockade and by invasion and foreign attack from every quarter.

Desiring to paint his untruthful picture of conditions in Soviet Russia with a semblance of authenticity, the writer refers to the "many men and women" who have come out of Russia and have given evidence "pertaining to conditions there" (page 5). Characteristically, however, he refrains from even the slightest reference

to the reports of many investigators, English labor leaders, journalists and others, which completely refute this picture. He refers to statements by Messrs. Ben Turner and Tom Shaw; but he completely ignores the report of the Labor Delegation of which these men were members, which demanded in the most energetic terms the lifting of the blockade against Soviet Russia and the cessation of foreign intervention, holding these responsible for the sufferings of the Russian people. He makes no reference to the separate reports of other members of the British Labor delegation. To cite Messrs. Turner and Shaw, and to ignore the official findings of their delegation and to pass over the reports of the other investigating delegates, reveals a deliberate purpose on the part of the author of the pamphlet to suppress all facts regarding Soviet Russia which are not useful to his prejudiced argument.

Passing over all witnesses unfavorable to his case, the pamphlet writer calls up "Miss Emma Goldman, the famous anarchist, who . . . has definitely repudiated Bolshevism" (page 5). Such a statement, of course, can only have been made out of deliberate intention to deceive, or else from total ignorance of even the simplest facts of modern political and social movements. Miss Goldman did not repudiate Bolshevism and could not have done so. Miss Goldman never was a Bolshevik and never subscribed to Communist theory. Miss Goldman is an anarchist, and as such is naturally a critic of much contained in Communist theory and practice.

From Emma Goldman the writer passes on to the London *Times* in search of support. He reproduces from the *Times* an anonymous document purporting to have come from a "member of the Council of People's Economy" (page 5). The *Times* is scarcely a reliable source of information on affairs in Soviet Russia, and this wholly unauthenticated document would be open to grave suspicion even did it not contain within itself evidence of being either a deliberate forgery or a clumsily garbled mistranslation. One sentence in this alleged document is sufficient to expose its character: "Experts predict that by August, 1920, all railway com-

munication will have come to a standstill" (page 6). It is now September, 1920, and railway communication, far from coming to a standstill, is still sufficient to move and supply the great Russian armies operating successfully on the Polish and Crimean fronts, and, in addition, to maintain regular train service to convey the rapidly increasing volume of commercial traffic from the Baltic ports to the interior of Russia. Other descriptions of conditions within Soviet Russia, equally pessimistic, may be taken as equally inaccurate.

Overlooking no opportunity to excite false prejudice against Soviet Russia, the writer casually remarks that "it may be recalled that the Russian Soviet Republic in its Constitution adopted in 1917 repudiated all forms of religion" (page 17). This is untrue. The writer must have known it to be untrue, if he had ever read the Constitution of the Soviet Republic. The Constitution did not "repudiate" any form of religion. On the contrary, it merely separated Church from State, and for the first time in the history of Russia made provision for the free profession of every form of religion.

I am introduced to the readers of the pamphlet as "the self-announced representative in the United States of the Soviet regime" (page 3). This is a wholly gratuitous misrepresentation of my official status, which is not "self-announced", but which rests, as the pamphlet itself states, upon "credentials issued by the Peoples' Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, from Moscow, under date of January 2, 1919, and sealed with the official seal of the Commissariat" (page 3).

It appears that my credentials do not please the pamphleteer: "The credentials of Mr. Martens, the accredited representative of the Soviet Republic to the United States did not warrant his assumption of diplomatic privilege" (page 10). Why not? My credentials are sealed and endorsed by the commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Republic. They are quite as valid and worthy of credence as the credentials carried by my colleagues, Messrs. Krassin and Kameneff, and honored by the Government of Great Britain.

But there is still a further complaint: "He never presented himself at the State Department or sought the usual audience with the Secretary of State" (page 10). I do not know what precise etiquette the author of the pamphlet would have prescribed for me, or what he would have done himself under similar circumstances. The facts, however, which he fails to state, are that on March 19, 1919, I forwarded my credentials to the Secretary of State of the United States, together with a memorandum in which I set forth the desire of my Government to enter into friendly political and economic relations with the United States, and requested an interview to discuss the details of this proposal. My communication to the Secretary of State was never acknowledged, nor were any of my several subsequent communications. In spite of these facts, which must have been well known to the writer, if he paid any attention to the testimony from which he pretends to be deriving his information, he charges me with a further irregularity on the ground that I "never communicated with the War Trade Board or any other Department of the United States Government respecting trade" (page 11). This is untrue. As the diplomatic representative of the Soviet Republic, it was my duty to have my credentials acknowledged by the Department of State before entering into negotiations with any other branch of the American Government. I did communicate with the Department of State respecting the desire of my Government to establish commercial relations with the United States. I submitted a lengthy memorandum to the State Department on that very subject.

From this point forward the pamphlet launches into a series of unrestrained misrepresentations concerning my activities and the work of my Bureau in New York.

"Documentary evidence," alleges the writer, without troubling to produce any documents, "indicated that a Bureau had been organized in the City of New York for the purpose of establishing communications with Russia, and carrying on propaganda work in America" (page 11). This is a distortion of fact. The evidence showed that I established my Bureau in New York for

the purpose of promoting commercial and political relations between the United States and Soviet Russia. Communication with my Government was essential and subsidiary to this purpose; my "propaganda" work, which I have never concealed, has been devoted solely to efforts to inform the American people concerning conditions in Soviet Russia and the real nature of the Soviet Government, and had as its only purpose the promotion of those friendly relations which were the object of my mission.

"Large sums of money," states the pamphlet (page 11), were brought over by my couriers. If the author were actually deriving his information from my testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee of the United States Senate, he might have been more explicit. He might have stated that the total of the money I had received for the support of my Bureau was, as I testified, about \$150,000. Out of this amount, I maintained my offices in New York, employing a staff of about thirty persons (not "Eight", as the pamphlet states) and published a weekly magazine. So much for the "large sums" which this writer credits to my account. A simple reckoning will show that the expenses of maintaining my bureau consumed all the funds at my disposal. Moreover, in all the several investigations which have been made into my activities by various official bodies in the United States no evidence has ever been introduced to show any expenditure of funds by me for any improper purpose.

There is introduced into the pamphlet an incomplete excerpt from the report of the United States Senate Committee in which it is stated that "a report alleged to have been sent by Martens . . . spoke of Martens' agents being 'busy in the Western States and in Canada . . .'" (page 12). In public hearing I emphatically denied ever having sent any such report. Moreover, although I repeatedly called for the production of this alleged report, as the record of the hearings will show, no such document was ever introduced into evidence. No evidence even of the existence of any such document was ever introduced. Nor was any evi-

dence submitted of the existence of any such alleged agents of mine in Canada.

In spite of these facts, which are all a matter of public record, the pamphlet does not hesitate to say that "it is apparent from the foregoing report . . . that his propaganda included Canada as well as the United States." The only reference to Canada in the quoted report is that to which I have referred above; an alleged passage from a document, the authenticity of which I absolutely deny, and which, despite repeated requests, was never introduced into evidence in order that I might have an opportunity to examine and expose its spurious character. The author of the pamphlet, however, intent upon crediting me with activities to which I never aspired, seems to find some further mysterious significance in the fact that the *New York Call* had a correspondent in Winnipeg and that "United States currency in Fifty Dollar denominations was quite extensively circulated in Winnipeg in May, 1919" (page 13). This descends to the ridiculous.

The *New York Call* is not my "chief publicity medium" (pp. 13, 17), nor does the writer of the pamphlet endeavour to establish any proof of this statement beyond its mere assertion. As for the Fifty Dollar bills in Winnipeg, the writer admits that these are "recalled" to his mind merely by his own reference to the "large sums" brought over by my couriers. This is too far-fetched for discussion.

The wildest flight of the writer's fancy, however, occurs in the following passage:

"Scores of documents and incidents could be quoted in evidence to prove the close connection existing between Martens' Soviet Bureau in New York and O.B.U. leaders in Canada. A few will doubtless suffice." (Page 16.)

This is a most flagrant untruth. In spite of his easy assurance, the author of the pamphlet does not substantiate his statement by the introduction of even a single "document" or "incident" showing any connection between my Bureau and the O.B.U. He refers vaguely to "appeals directed to all O.B.U. units in Canada to contribute to a fund for sending medical

assistance to Soviet Russia" (page 16). The implication is that such appeals have been sent by my Bureau, although the writer carefully refrains from stating this directly. If true, it would not be a very sinister connection, nor one which I would care to deny. Appeals for medical assistance for blockaded Russia could scarcely be represented as efforts to overthrow Canadian institutions. However, it is not true. My Bureau has sent no such appeals.

What he cannot show by evidence, the writer evidently hopes to establish by unsupported reiteration. "There is evidence," he repeats, "of the fact that Martens had agents at work in the Western States and Canada" (page 17). There is no such evidence, and the pamphlet does not contain any—except again the ridiculous reference to "Rev. Wm. Ivens . . . an active O.B.U. promoter and correspondent for the *New York Call*, Martens' chief publicity medium." This is not evidence. It is nonsense.

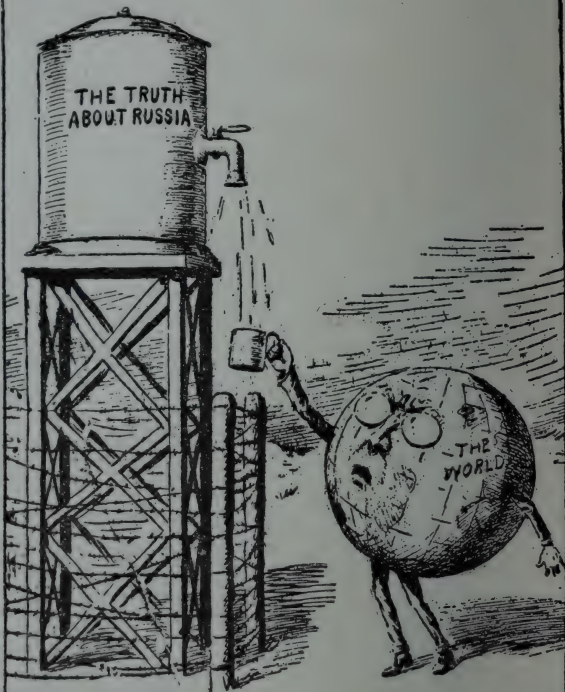
I think I have sufficiently exposed the real nature and worth of the "information" contained in this publication. In conclusion, however, I desire to quote one sentence to which I can completely subscribe:

"Neither a nation nor an individual can live wholly independent of all others." (Page 13.)

This is a social and political axiom of profound significance. It is all the more remarkable, then, that a writer who recognizes this fundamental truth should have composed an article which purports to describe and explain the internal conditions of Soviet Russia and which omits entirely, as though these were irrelevant and of no effect, all reference to the blockade which has been imposed upon that country for more than two years as well as to the constant succession of invasions and foreign attacks.

I do not deny that conditions within Soviet Russia are unhappy, that there is privation and disease, disruption of industry and transportation, and in some regions starvation. But I must indignantly protest against this malicious attempt to attribute all these ills to the existing Government and to the social order instituted by the Russian people. Russia has been block-

aded and cut off from all the sources of essential supplies upon which its industry, as organized under the backward policy of the old regime, had depended. Russia has had to devote all its available men and means to self-defense against foreign assault. No fair-minded man, even the most critical, can ignore these facts, as the author of this pamphlet has done, and still pretend to give honest information respecting the Soviet System.



Nelson Haiding

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE
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